

I. INTRODUCTION

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This land management plan is designed to be a living document. It describes the dynamic ecological conditions and managerial goals of the Hallelujah Junction Wildlife Area. The plan uses an adaptive management approach and assumes that goals and tasks will continue to be updated and refined as more information is gathered and conditions change. It is written for a wide range of audiences that have varying levels of knowledge about ecosystems and adaptive management techniques as well as varying degrees of familiarity with the Wildlife Area itself.



Main entrance to the Hallelujah Junction Wildlife Area. October 2006, SEI.

About the California Department of Fish and Game

The mission of the California Department of Fish and Game is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public.

The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) maintains native fish, wildlife, plant species and natural communities for their intrinsic and ecological value and their benefits to people. This includes habitat protection and maintenance in a sufficient amount and quality to ensure the survival of all species and natural communities. The department is also responsible for the diversified use of fish and wildlife including recreational, commercial, scientific and educational uses.

Purpose of CDFG Wildlife Areas. The CDFG currently manages more than 100 state wildlife areas. These areas are scattered throughout the state, most located in central and northern California. The state owns about two-thirds of the total acreage while the remainder is managed under agreements with other public agencies. The state acquires these wildlife areas to protect and enhance habitat for wildlife species, and to manage these lands for compatible, wildlife-related public uses. These lands provide habitat for a wide array of plant and animal species, including many listed as threatened or endangered.

Purpose of CDFG Land Management Plans. The CDFG develops management plans for all its lands. Its purpose in preparing a land management plan (LMP) is multifold:

- To guide management of habitats, species, and programs to achieve the department's mission to protect and enhance wildlife.
- To identify appropriate public uses of the property.
- To serve as a descriptive inventory of fish, wildlife and native plant habitats that occur on or use the property.
- To provide an overview of the property's operation and maintenance, and personnel requirements to implement management goals. It also serves as a budget planning aid for annual regional budget preparation.
- To provide a description of potential and actual environmental impacts and subsequent mitigation that may occur during management, and to provide environmental documentation to comply with state and federal statutes and regulations.

About the Hallelujah Junction Wildlife Area

The State of California purchased the Hallelujah Junction Wildlife Area (HJWA) in 1989 for the express purpose of protecting the winter range and migration corridors of the Loyalton-Truckee deer herd. The initial land purchase totaled 3,742 acres. Since that time, six additional expansions have brought the total to 13,394 acres. The original HJWA LMP (CDFG 1990) identified three primary management goals:

- To preserve critical deer winter range and migration corridors from development.
- To protect, restore, enhance and develop riparian and wetland habitats.
- To provide public use with an emphasis on interpretive and educational use.

Preparation of the HJWA Land Management Plan. The department prepared this update to the HJWA LMP with assistance from Sustain Environmental Inc. (SEI) and its affiliates, including the Geographic Information Center (GIC) at California State University, Chico, EcoSystems West Consulting, and Past Forward Inc. The department provided overall guidance to the planning process and was responsible for all decisions about the content of the plan. SEI, under contract to the department, provided technical and scientific expertise, and was responsible for most administrative aspects of the plan, including preparation of the initial draft.

Information to guide the plan's content came from three primary sources:

- Department policy and federal and state law.
- Consultation with area managers as part of an integrated planning program.
- Information collected about the occurrence of biological and cultural resources (including limited field surveys) and analysis of scientific literature to assess the efficacy of different management strategies.

Development of Management Goals. The staff and area managers from the CDFG's North Central Region were the primary sources of information on management issues at the HJWA. Management goals and objectives were crafted based on planning interviews with CDFG staff. These goals will continue to be refined by the Region's area land managers.

To assist with achieving consistency with the California Resources Agency and CDFG's partner agencies, state resource planning documents were also considered in the development of management goals. The CDFG is an integral part of the California Resources Agency, which oversees the management of the state's natural resources. It also partners with the California Wildlife Conservation Board, which directs public investments in wildlife conservation, and the California Fish and Game Commission, which provides rulemaking decisions. Key planning documents reviewed to assist in developing goals for this LMP include:

- California Wildlife Action Plan (CDFG 2007) <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/wap/report.html>
- Resource Status Assessment and Trends Methodology (Hoenicke and Hoshovsky 2002) http://legacy.ca.gov/pub_docs/Natural_Resource_Health_and_Condition_Methodology_Report_FINAL.pdf
- Legal Mandates Related to the Conservation of Land and Natural Resources (Fulton et al. 2001) http://legacy.ca.gov/pub_docs/CCRISP_LegalMandates_V8.1.pdf
- North American Mule Deer Conservation Plan (Mule Deer Working Group 2004) <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/hunting/deer/docs/NAMuleDeerConsPlanFinal.pdf>
- Coordinated Implementation Plan for Bird Conservation in California (IWJV 2005) <http://www.iwjb.org/Images/CAPlan2005.pdf>
- Draft Avian Conservation Plan for the Sierra Nevada Bioregion (Siegel and DeSante 1999) <http://www.prbo.org/calpif/pdfs/sierra.v-1.pdf>
- Riparian Bird Conservation Plan (Ballard et al. 2004) <http://www.prbo.org/calpif/pdfs/riparian.v-2.pdf>
- Sagebrush Bird Conservation Plan (Holmes et al. 2005) <http://www.prbo.org/calpif/pdfs/sage.v-1.pdf>

The HJWA LMP is based on adaptive management principles. As such, management goals focus first on establishing baseline conditions of biological diversity, habitat integrity and environmental health within the Wildlife Area. This information will help CDFG staff to determine how effective current management practices are in sustaining the HJWA, as well as assist in the development of meaningful indicators and performance measures for determining management success in the future.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Initial Study (IS) was prepared to evaluate if LMP implementation would adversely impact the environment (Appendix G). A proposed Negative Declaration (ND) finding has been prepared because IS analysis concluded that this LMP, as proposed, would not have potentially significant adverse environmental impacts.

The HJWA LMP is programmatic in nature; thus, specific projects that may be developed consistent with the plan are not currently known. Full implementation of the LMP's goals and tasks is also contingent upon having adequate staff and operating budget. Any future projects will need to be evaluated in conjunction with the IS/ND to assess if additional project-specific CEQA analysis is necessary. CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162-15164 will be consulted to determine the extent of additional CEQA review required for future projects.

General Policy Guide. This update to the HJWA LMP is intended as a general policy guide to the management of the Wildlife Area. It does not specifically authorize or make a pre-commitment to any substantive physical changes to the Wildlife Area. With the exception of ongoing habitat restoration and enhancement, and operations and maintenance activities, any substantive physical changes that are not currently approved will require subsequent authorizations and approvals. Future projects may also require additional permits, consultations or approvals. Examples of such requirements include:

- *California State Lands Commission:* Consultation/permit for possible secondary impacts to surrounding lands underlying rivers and streams.
- *CDFG:* Internal consultation regarding California Endangered Species Act (CESA) compliance and streambed alteration agreements (CDFG Code §1602).
- *Regional Water Quality Board:* National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System construction stormwater permit (Notice of Intent to proceed under the statewide General Construction Permit); Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 clean water certification if CWA Section 404 permit is required or if isolated wetlands subject to the Porter-Cologne Act will be affected.
- *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE):* Section 404 CWA permit for discharge or fill of waters of the United States; Section 10 Rivers and Harbors Act permit for work in navigable waters of the United States.
- *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:* ESA consultation and take authorizations.